TRUST IN LEARNING (ACADEMIES)

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

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Approval By: Quality of Education Committee	Lead: Director of School Improvement	Review date: Spring 2028
As part of the review process, this policy/procedure has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.		

History of Policy Changes:

Date	Page	Change	Reason for Change
February 2025		New policy	New over-arching policy for the Trust

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1. Statement of Intent

At Trust In Learning (Academies), we are dedicated to providing a Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum that prepares pupils for the complexities of modern life. RSHE is integral to fostering the development of self-awareness, respect for others, and healthy, positive relationships. This policy ensures that RSHE is delivered inclusively and reflects the diverse needs and backgrounds of our school community while adhering to statutory requirements and guidance from the Department for Education.

The policy is rooted in the Trust's commitment to inclusivity, safeguarding, and promoting the wellbeing of every pupil. In line with the Equality Act 2010, it ensures that all content is accessible, inclusive, and respectful of diversity.

It has the following intent, to:

- Foster positive values and a moral framework, enabling pupils to make sound judgments about relationships, decisions, and behaviour.
- Develop deeper knowledge and understanding about various family structures, friendships, and intimate relationships, emphasising healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds.
- Address the importance of sexual health and wellbeing, including contraception, pregnancy, and reproductive health, while fostering an understanding of emotional and physical maturity.
- Promote understanding of laws surrounding relationships, such as consent, safeguarding, and digital safety.
- Enable pupils to access reliable health information and advice, especially about sexual health, contraception, and pregnancy.

2. Values and Principles

This Trust Policy is set out with the following principles at its core:

- **Trust in Learning Academies** is a family of schools, each with a distinctive identity, collaborating to strengthen and support each other.
- We deliver high-quality education with evidence-informed approaches to teaching, learning, and the curriculum.
- Inclusion is at the heart of all we do. We actively listen to the voices of our pupils, staff, and communities.
- Every school makes deliberate choices to be sustainable and globally focused.

The Trust vision is to:

1. Inspire pupils to trust in learning and achieve their full potential.
2. Empower pupils to have confidence in their successes to make a positive contribution to the world.
3. Remove barriers to learning and help transform the lives of our pupils.

Any data collected, stored, or managed as a result of this policy is in accordance with UK and any relevant retained or assimilated EU law, and in line with the Trust's ethos and values.

This policy has been framed in accordance with the guidance on best practice from the Department for Education (DfE). The policy is supported by parental consultation at school level, particularly regarding the curriculum and processes each school has agreed.

3. Objectives and Scope

3.1 Objectives

Our RSHE policy aims to:

- Provide pupils with a clear understanding of relationships, emotional well-being, and reproductive health.
- Equip pupils with the knowledge and skills to make informed, safe, and respectful decisions in their relationships and personal lives.
- Foster respect for diversity in relationships, family structures, and personal identities, consistent with the Equality Act 2010.
- Promote an understanding of consent, personal boundaries, and safeguarding, both online and offline.
- Support pupils in recognising and managing emotions, as well as developing self-confidence and resilience.

3.2 Scope

This policy applies to all registered pupils in both primary and secondary schools within Trust In Learning (Academies). The content of RSHE will be age-appropriate and tailored to the developmental needs of pupils.

The policy aligns with the following Trust policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy: Ensuring the protection and well-being of pupils in all aspects of RSHE.
- Pupil Well Being Policy: Promoting and supporting the mental, emotional, social, and physical well-being of all our pupils.
- Curriculum Policy: Embedding RSHE as part of a holistic educational framework. It takes into account key changes from updated RSHE and Health Education statutory guidance (2024).

Relevant guidance which has been referred to:

- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024
- SEND Code of Practice DfE 2014, updated 2024
- Guidance on British Values 2014
- Guidance on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children 2017, updated 2021
- DfE Respectful School Communities Self-Review and Signposting Tool 2019
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

4. Responsibilities and accountabilities

4.1 Responsibilities of the Trust central team

- To ensure that the policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- To ensure the policy is well communicated to all Headteachers.
- To ensure that the policy is regularly reviewed.

4.2 Responsibilities of the Headteacher

- To ensure the implementation of and compliance with current policy and procedures at school level
- To monitor systems, resources, impact and actions related to the policy
- To ensure the policy is well communicated and staff understand their role in its implementation
- To ensure compliance with RSHE curriculum, including new topics and year thresholds.
- To oversee curriculum transparency, allowing parents to view materials and addressing concerns effectively.
- To establish clear policies for teaching age-restricted or safeguarding-relevant content.
- To handle any complaints at school level which arise through this policy

4.3 Responsibilities of school leaders

- To ensure staff are inducted into the procedures surrounding this policy and any updates
- To provide training to ensure policy compliance
- To hold sessions for staff and pupils as required, to ensure the policy is understood
- To develop and implement detailed RSHE plans aligned with new guidance
- To ensure staff delivering RSHE are trained on new topics, year thresholds, and sensitive content delivery, and have the confidence to seek help and ask for advice where they may find content difficult to manage
- To support teachers with resources, safeguarding strategies, and parental engagement.
- To monitor teaching quality and adherence to updated RSHE policies.

4.4 Responsibilities of all staff

- To uphold the whole school approach to the policy through modelling expected standards and utilising appropriate procedures
- To keep up to date with policy changes over time
- To promote a collaborative and inclusive ethos where all pupils can thrive
- To feed back to school leaders where concerns may arise in the implementation of the policy
- To deliver RSHE topics age-appropriately, adhering to new thresholds and restrictions
- To ask for help and support where content delivery may be complex for themselves to manage

4.5 Responsibilities of parents

- To support the implementation of the policy with the child
- Where a parent has feedback on the implementation of the policy, to raise this directly with the school while continuing to work in partnership with the school

4.6 Responsibilities of pupils

- To uphold school rules and expectations and thereby comply with the implementation of the policy
- To feed back on the implementation of the policy through appropriate means, such as school council, to school staff

4.7 Responsibilities of local governors

- To review with school staff how RSHE is delivered so that schools can meet their legal obligations
- To review with school staff how clear information is provided to parents on the subject content and the right to request their child is withdrawn

5. Definitions and RSHE content

5.1 Primary School RSE

The Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 have made Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools. Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools and the content set out in this guidance therefore focuses on Relationships Education. This includes teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults. This starts with pupils being taught about what a relationship is, what friendship is, what family means and who the people are who can support them. From the beginning of primary school, building on early education, pupils are taught how to take turns, how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect, the importance of honesty and truthfulness, permission seeking and giving, and the concept of personal privacy. Establishing personal space and boundaries, showing respect and understanding the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact – these are the forerunners of teaching about consent, which takes place at secondary. Relationships Education also creates an opportunity to enable pupils to be taught about positive emotional and mental wellbeing, including how friendships can support mental wellbeing.

Through Relationships Education (and RSE), schools should teach pupils the knowledge they need to recognise and to report abuse, including emotional, physical and sexual abuse. In primary schools, this can be delivered by focusing on boundaries and privacy, ensuring young people understand that they have rights over their own bodies. This should also include understanding boundaries in friendships with peers and also in families and with others, in all contexts, including online. Pupils should know how to report concerns and seek advice when they suspect or know that something is wrong. At all stages it will be important to balance

teaching children about making sensible decisions to stay safe (including online) whilst being clear it is never the fault of a child who is abused and why victim blaming is always wrong. These subjects complement Health Education and as part of a comprehensive programme and whole school approach, this knowledge can support safeguarding of children.

See Appendix 9.1 for a full list of what pupils should know by the end of primary school.

5.2 Secondary School RSE

The aim of RSE at secondary school is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help pupils understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

It is recognised that there will be a range of opinions regarding RSE. The starting principle when teaching each of these must be that the applicable law should be taught in a factual way so that pupils are clear on their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Effective RSE also supports people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.

See Appendix 9.2 for a full list of what pupils should know by the end of secondary school.

6. RSHE Curriculum

6.1 Delivery

The RSHE curriculum is delivered through:

1. **PSHE Education**: Core lessons focusing on personal, social, health, and economic aspects of relationships and **wellbeing**.
2. **Science Curriculum**: Covering biological aspects, including human reproduction and physical development.
3. **Digital Media and Online Safety**: Emphasising the safe use of digital platforms, and understanding privacy, and recognising online risks. This includes discussions on cyberbullying, managing harmful content, and understanding the impact of online behaviours.
4. **Religious Education (RE)**: Exploring moral choices, ethical values, and diverse perspectives on family life and relationships. RE also fosters critical thinking and addresses moral dilemmas.
5. **Assemblies and Themed Events**: Addressing topics like anti-bullying, respect, and inclusivity in relationships.
6. **Additional planned special events/visitors:** Focused, in-depth sessions exploring key elements such as sexual health, consent, and safeguarding, often with the support of external specialists vetted for relevance and suitability.

These diverse delivery mechanisms ensure a holistic and dynamic approach to RSHE.

6.2 Inclusivity

The RSHE curriculum reflects the diverse beliefs and identities within our school communities. It represents different cultures, religions, family structures, gender identities, and sexual orientations. Lessons are differentiated to meet the developmental needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEND).

6.3 Parental Engagement

Parents and guardians are valued partners in delivering effective RSHE. Schools within the Trust will:

- Provide clear and transparent information about the RSHE curriculum.
- Offer opportunities for parents to discuss content and ask questions.
- Respect parents' statutory rights to withdraw their children from sex education components, except for content covered in the national science curriculum.

6.4 Safeguarding

RSHE lessons include robust safeguarding measures to ensure that pupils feel supported in discussing sensitive topics. Safeguarding measures align with statutory guidance and promote a safe, respectful learning environment.

7. Right to withdraw

7.1 Parent right to withdraw

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request, the head teacher or their appointed leader, will discuss the request with parents and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Schools will document this process to ensure a record is kept.

7.2 Parent discussion

The discussion with parents will include the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child, including any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher. Head teachers will automatically grant a request to withdraw a pupil from any sex education delivered in primary schools, other than as part of the science curriculum. The school should respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, except in exceptional circumstances, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16.

7.3 Three terms before age 16

At three terms before the child turns 16, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

7.4 Pupils with SEND

The withdrawal process is the same for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the head teacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision.

7.5 Education instead of RSE

If a pupil is excused from sex education, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

7.6 No right of withdrawal

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

8. Monitoring and Review

The implementation of the RSHE policy is regularly monitored through feedback from pupils, staff, and parents, as well as evaluations of curriculum outcomes. Annual reviews ensure compliance with statutory guidance and the evolving needs of the Trust's schools.

9. Appendices

9.1 What primary school children should know by the end of primary school:

Families and people who care for me	Pupils should know • that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability. • the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives. • that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care. • that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up. • that marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong. • how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.
Caring friendships	Pupils should know • how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends. • the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties. • that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. • that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right. • how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.
Respectful relationships	Pupils should know

	• the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs. • practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships. • the conventions of courtesy and manners. • the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. • that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority. • about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help. • what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive. • the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.
Online relationships	Pupils should know • that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not. • that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-toface relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous. • the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them. • how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. • how information and data is shared and used online.
Being safe	Pupils should know • what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context). • about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe. • that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact.

	• how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know. • how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult. • how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard. • how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so. • where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources

In addition:

Physical and mental wellbeing – teachers should cover the benefits of physical and mental wellbeing and be clear that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health. This starts with pupils being taught about the benefits and importance of daily exercise, good nutrition and sufficient sleep, and giving pupils the language and knowledge to understand the normal range of emotions that everyone experiences. Teachers should go on to talk about the steps pupils can take to protect and support their own and others' health and wellbeing, including simple self-care techniques, personal hygiene, prevention of health and wellbeing problems and basic first aid.

Menstruation – Menstruation is a natural and empowering part of life. Our schools celebrate wellbeing, promote confidence, and ensure every student has access to the products and support they need to thrive without interrupting their education. The onset of menstruation can be confusing or even alarming for girls if they are not prepared. Pupils should be taught key facts about the menstrual cycle including what is an average period, range of menstrual products and the implications for emotional and physical health. In addition to curriculum content, schools should also make adequate and sensitive arrangements to help girls prepare for and manage menstruation including with requests for menstrual products. Schools consider the needs of their cohort of pupils in designing this content.

9.2 What secondary school children should know by the end of secondary school:

Schools should continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required and in addition cover the following content by the end of secondary:

Families	Pupils should know • that there are different types of committed, stable relationships. • how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children. • what marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony. • why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into. • the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships. • the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting. • how to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.
Respectful relationships, including friendships	Pupils should know • the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship. • practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships. • how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). • that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs. • about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.

	• that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control. • what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable. • the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.
Online and media	Pupils should know • their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online. • about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online. • not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them. • what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online. • the impact of viewing harmful content. • that specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners. • that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail. • how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.
Being safe	Pupils should know • the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships. • how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online).
Intimate and sexual relationships,	Pupils should know

including sexual health	• how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship. • that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing. • the facts about reproductive health, including fertility, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause. • that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others. • that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex. • the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available. • the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage. • that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help). • how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing. • about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment. • how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour. • how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.
Mental wellbeing	Pupils should know • how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary. • that happiness is linked to being connected to others. • how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns. • common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression). • how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health.

	• the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness.
Internet safety and harms	Pupils should know • the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image), how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships including social media, the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online. • how to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours.
Physical health and fitness	Pupils should know • the positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress. • the characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health, including cancer and cardiovascular ill-health. • about the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.
Healthy eating	Pupils should know • how to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay and cancer
Drugs, alcohol and tobacco	Pupils should know • the facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link between drug use, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions. • the law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances. • the physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood. • the physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency. • awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks.

	• the facts about the harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so.
Health and prevention	Pupils should know • about personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics. • about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-ups at the dentist. • (late secondary) the benefits of regular self-examination and screening. • the facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination. • the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.
Basic first aid	Pupils should know • basic treatment for common injuries. • life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR • the purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed.
Changing adolescent body	Pupils should know • key facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body and menstrual wellbeing. • the main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.

9.3 (Name of School) Information on RSHE

Schools to include:

- responsible person for RSHE
- where to find content of RSHE sessions online
- For parents, how to withdraw your child from sex education lessons at this school, including a link to how to register this with the school